THE MALANKARA SABHA

ENGLISH QUARTERLY

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2 APRIL - JUNE 2024



"LET NO ONE FEAR DEATH,
FOR THE DEATH OF OUR SAVIOUR HAS SET US FREE!
CHRIST IS RISEN AND THE ANGELS REJOICE!"
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM


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The icon of the Resurrection is the icon of Easter, celebrating Jesus' triumph over death. It depicts Jesus Christ descending into Hades and pulling Adam and Eve from the tombs, symbolizing His victory back to the very beginning of humankind.

His Holiness Writes...



Dearly beloved,

We are extremely delighted and offer our praise and thanksgiving to God Almighty for the overwhelming success of the Marthoman Heritage Meeting held on 25 February 2024. On behalf of the Holy Church, we wholeheartedly congratulate each one of you for making this grand meeting a resounding success. We are happier and more hopeful about the future of the Church in the backdrop of the Paithruka Sammelanam, because our beloved children of the Holy Church are with us, as our strength and power.

India, our mother land, the largest democratic republic, is getting ready for yet another political mandate. Considering the situations prevailing in the political arena of India, and being the head of an indigenous Church of India, we would like to share our concerns that need to be addressed by all political parties. Keeping a distance between Politics and Religion is the need of the hour. The separation of politics from religion is fundamental for the healthy functioning of any society. While religion plays a vital role in shaping individual beliefs and values, intertwining it with politics can lead to numerous challenges. One of

the primary reasons for distancing politics from religion is to ensure the preservation of democratic principles such as equality, freedom of conscience, and secular governance. When religion and politics are entangled, it often leads to discrimination and marginalization of religious minorities. In a diverse society, where individuals hold varying religious beliefs, it is essential for the state to remain neutral and provide equal rights and opportunities to all citizens, regardless of their faith. Furthermore, mixing politics with religion can hinder social progress and scientific advancement. Dogmatic religious beliefs may clash with evidence-based policymaking, hindering efforts to address pressing issues such as climate change, healthcare, and education. Moreover, the fusion of religion and politics can fuel sectarianism and aggravate interfaith tensions. History is replete with examples of conflicts and violence arising from the imposition of religious ideologies in governance. By keeping politics separate from religion, societies can foster greater harmony and respect for diversity.

In the recently concluded Holy Episcopal Synod, it was decided to promote greater inclusion and participation of women in leadership roles and in the administration within the church. Even though the Malankara Orthodox Church has given roles to women at the parish level administration, the Church is revisiting the organizational structures to ensure more participation of women in the life of the Church. Furthermore, providing opportunities for women to receive theological education and training can help equip them for leadership roles within the church. As of now, our St. Thomas Theological Seminary, Nagpur, is admitting women for theological studies, as well as encouraging women to pursue advanced studies in theology and related fields. Ultimately, our goal is not just to increase the representation of women in church matters but also to recognize and affirm the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals, regardless of gender. Through intentional efforts to promote gender equality and justice, religious communities can better reflect the values of compassion, justice, and inclusivity that lie at the heart of our faith and traditions.

As we are nearing the culmination of another Lenten season, the observation of lent, fasting, prostration etc. may help us to be more refined human beings, ensuring more participation in the life and activities of the church and enjoy a life of peace and happiness that is ensured by the Resurrection of our Lord.

Baselios Marthoma Mathews III





Editorial

Switching political loyalty has become very common, especially during election time. As India is preparing for Lok Sabha elections in April-May 2024, we have witnessed many such defections and crossing of party borders, in an unprecedented manner. Especially when certain political stalwarts left their traditional party of allegiance and joined other parties against which they were fighting till that moment, it was not only breaking news but also a shock to many of us. There can be various reasons behind such changes in allegiance, including personal ambition, ideological shifts, dissatisfaction with the current party leadership or policies, fear of being persecuted by the ruling class, opportunities for personal gain, or changing political circumstances. A big question to be answered is whether the ultimate faithfulness is to principles and ideologies in politics or to just one's own personal gains and power only?

Slowly we are realising the fact that the 'fickleness syndrome' of the floating generations of our era has started affecting the political parties and leaders also. It is but common knowledge that in our prevailing culture there is no prominent place for life-long commitments either to a married life partner, to family in general, to a profession or company, to a country or place of birth, or faith etc. Steadfastness is shallow and instability is constant in this culture.

Christian tradition always upheld the importance of constancy and permanent faithfulness to the Lord Jesus and the Kingdom of God values. Permanent loyalty to one's life partner in married life is also such an uncompromising value according to this tradition. The concept of "steadfastness till the end" is a central theme in Christian tradition, particularly in relation to the perseverance of believers in their faith journey. It emphasizes the importance of remaining steadfast, faithful, and committed to following Christ throughout one's life, despite the trials and temptations that may arise. Jesus himself says, "the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

Many of Jesus' followers came forward to witness that they are faithful to Him and His Church more than their life itself. Churches like the Coptic Orthodox Church produced many such martyrs even in the twenty first century and the three Coptic monks murdered in a monastery in South Africa in March 2024 are the latest to be added to this honourable list. While being in solidarity with this Church and praying for them, it is comforting to note that the Church is radiating the light of steadfastness and permanent loyalty to faith.

Most of the Apostles deserted Jesus during the painful experience of crucifixion. But two events consequent to the crucifixion helped them to be firm in faith and steadfast to their calling, which are Easter and Pentecost. The Risen Lord appeared to the apostles again and again to make them strong in their faith.

As we celebrate Easter, the feast of feasts and Pentecost every year, may our faith be deepened through the repeated interventions of the Lord and the Holy Spirit. May the Risen Lord continue to shine upon us and the Holy Spirit strengthen us to be firm and constant till the end in our faithfulness to His Kingdom of love, justice, peace and holiness.

Bijesh Philip Achen
Editor, Malankara Sabha English Quarterly



Presidential Address of H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III at the Marthoman Heritage Commemoration Assembly

(The full text of the Presidential Address delivered by H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, Primate of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church at the Marthoman Heritage Commemoration Assembly held at Nehru Stadium, Kottayam, on Sunday, 25th February 2024, as translated by Prof. Jacob Kurian Onattu from the Malayalam text.)

Glory be to the Triune God. Your Excellencies Sri. Arif Mohammed Khan, Honourable Governor of Kerala and Adv. P.S. Sreedharan Pillai, Honourable Governor of Goa; Beloved and respected Metropolitan Anthony from the Russian Orthodox Church; Beloved and respected Metropolitan Abbe Melchizedek Nurbegen Gede representing the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; Honourable Ministers Sri V.N.Vasavan and Smt. Veena George; Honourable MLAs Sri. Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan and Sri Chandy Oommen; Your Grace Dr. Yuhanon Mar Chrysostomos Metropolitan, Secretary of the Holy Episcopal Synod and Working Committee member; Fr. Dr. Thomas Varghese Amayil, Priest Trustee of the Church and Sri. Ronnie Varghese, Lay Trustee; Adv. Sri Biju Oommen, Association Secretary; Your Graces—our brother Metropolitans, Respected Cor-Episcopoi, Rambans, Priests, Nuns, Social and Political leaders and our beloved spiritual children—our joy and our crown—from the thirty dioceses of our Church, who have assembled here well in advance.

We are extremely happy about your commitment to the Church and devotion to



God which made you assemble here, enduring many difficulties and hardships, in response to our exhortation. Looking at you, our humble self can proudly say "O Malankara Church, you are blessed." This magnificent assembly is filling our heart with great joy. This Marthoman Heritage Assembly has already become one of the most notable historical events of the church. We must praise God Almighty for making this Heritage Assembly one of the larger meetings that the Nazrani-land called Kottayam has ever witnessed.

God in His heaven, the Angels, all the Saints, especially our Apostle St. Thomas, the Archdeacons who tirelessly strove for the survival of the church, the Marthoma Methrans, blessed Saint Mar Yeldho Bava, Saint Parumala Thirumeni, Saint Vattasseril Thirumeni, our illustrious predecessors - the Catholicoses who adorned the Apostolic throne of the East and all our departed fathers, mothers and brothers, are rejoicing now.

"O Malankara Church, you are fortunate. O St. Thomas Heritage, you are blessed, for your children are brave, respectable and holy. The strong winds which blew and the tides which rose were unable to destroy you, O Malankara Church. No power will be able to destroy you in times to come. We must pledge that we will not allow any power to pull down the Malankara Church."

This heritage assembly is the inevitability of the times we live in. The faith which St. Thomas firmly established upon the foundation of his own blood will not be washed away with the passage of time or in the midst of meaningless sneers. We cannot give up the liturgy and indigenous traditions which the church inherited during its 2000 years of evolution as also those that were added from time to time. We are not ready to give these up. We can boldly say that the ridicule and sarcasm which we daily receive will not take us away from these liturgical practices and ancient traditions.

Why do we celebrate the Marthoman heritage? Many people may ask whether this St. Thomas tradition is not common to all. But as regards the Malankara Orthodox Church, the Marthoman heritage is based on three foundational principles.

The first is the continuance of the ecclesiastical succession of Apostle St. Thomas. From the 4th century onwards, we have received historical evidence to the fact that St. Thomas lived here in Malankara from AD 52 to AD 72, founded seven and half parish churches and ordained priests from families such as Pakalomattam, Sankarapuri, Kalli and Kaliyankal. With the support of historical facts, Abdul Ahad Ramban (patriarchal delegate



who lived at Manjanikkara from 1933 to 1946 and who later became Patriarch Yakob III) in the introduction to his book "Syrian Church History," (originally written in Arabic, translated by Thakadiyil Yakob Ramban), has categorically pointed out that Apostle St. Thomas founded seven and half parish churches in Kerala and that he ordained priests from families such as Sankarapuri, Kalli and Kaliyankal. After his elevation as Metropolitan in 1950, he wrote another book in Arabic – 'History of the Syrian Church in India' which has been translated into English by an individual by name Dr. Mathimoosa. On page 41 of this book, Patriarch Yakob III has written that Apostle St. Thomas ordained priests from 4 families as also a bishop with the name 'Kepha'. The introduction to this book claims that it was written after closely scrutinizing many history books. The Patriarch has not refuted this historical truth. He became Patriarch in 1957, with the name Yakob III. Unfortunately, the same Patriarch who had underscored the heritage of St. Thomas, declared that St. Thomas didn't have priestly authority, through the infamous Kalpana number 203 of 1970. Children of the church, think independently. Nobody can disprove historical truths. This was why the Patriarch could not but write about St. Thomas and his work in his books. His revelations about St. Thomas may be considered as an exhortation to those who strayed away from the St. Thomas tradition to come back.

The priestly or ecclesiastical tradition of St. Thomas is still continuing in the Malankara church. From the 4th to the 17th centuries (till 1653), it was the bishops from the Persian church who helped us carry forward the priestly traditions. Though attempts to Latinize the church were in full steam here between 1599 and 1653, the Marthoma priestly tradition was not entirely swept away from our land. The Portuguese authorities refused permission to the Persian bishop Ahatalla Bava to enter into Malankara. So, after the Great Oath of the Slanting Cross in 1653, the Nazrani community came to the realization that ordaining local or indigenous bishops was the only solution to this problem. Consequently 12 priests joined hands to elevate Archdeacon Thomas as bishop with the name Marthoma I. The Nazranis requested the heads of the Persian, Antiochean and Egyptian churches to validate this elevation. The Antiochean ecclesiastical assistance first came to us in 1665 when Mar Gregorios from the Syrian church came to



Kerala to lay hands on Marthoma I in order to authenticate his elevation as bishop. But in course of time, faction feuds began in our church when the Antiochean church tried to impose their supremacy over local bishops and claim the ownership of the church. This became very intense in 1876 with the arrival of Patriarch Peter III in Kerala. Even though the establishment of the Catholicate in India in 1912 conferred the Metropolitan of India with all powers and privileges similar to those of the Patriarch, the 'invasion - subjugation tendencies' of the Syrian Antiochean Church are still continuing. This is the root cause of the conflicts in the Malankara Church that still continue. We are grateful and respectful to all of them who helped us carry forward the St. Thomas tradition in India. But, if the people who helped us once, attempt to tarnish and obscure the priestly traditions of St. Thomas and proclaim themselves as our overlords, the children of the Malankara church will never agree to it. In short, the gist of the continuing conflicts in the church is that the people who came to help us in a situation of crisis, are claiming ownership and overlordship over this ancient and indigenous Indian church.

The second foundational principle is that the St. Thomas heritage is an apostolic traditional asset. Some people have doubts as to when the apostolic tradition of St. Thomas started in India. This is not something that Patriarch Abdul Messiah brought to India. History should be examined very closely. On 19th October 1817, Kidangan Mar Philexinos consecrated Punnathra Mar Dionysius as the 11th Malankara Metropolitan and issued a Kalpana describing him as the successor of St. Thomas. *This is the first evidence of the continuing apostolic tradition of St. Thomas here.*

Secondly on 29th March 1829, Cheppad Mar Dionysius consecrated Kuthoor Geevarghese Malpan as Metropolitan of Thozhiyoor. In the Sthathikkon (statement of empowerment), the Malankara Metropolitan is described as the possessor of the throne of St. Thomas.

Thirdly, it is clearly written in the Kalpana sent by Cheppad Mar Dionysius to all churches in Malankara that since Mathews Mar Athanasios has not submitted a sthathikon to anybody, his ecclesiastical status is dubious, his current activities are not satisfactory and that no one shall receive him as he is unsuitable for the throne of this church which has the





apostolic tradition of St. Thomas.

Fourthly, it is inscribed in Syriac on the east side wall of Rakkad church (Angamaly Diocese) that in the days of the Patriarch Moran Mar Ignatius Yakob II, in the middle of Great Lent, on 27th March 1857, Behanam Maphriyana Mar Baselios and Yuyakim Mar Coorilos seated on the throne of St. Thomas in Malankara, Abded Saharo Mar Gregorios of Uraha, Metropolitan of Jerusalem who is also the 5th Patriarch, had visited that church. This too is undeniable evidence for the continuing apostolic tradition of St. Thomas in India.

Fifthly, we must call your attention to the establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara on 15th September 1912. At the Niranam church, when Murimattathil Paulos Mar Ivanios was elevated as the first Catholicos, H.H. Patriarch Abdul Messiah declared him as the Catholicos of the East seated on the throne of St. Thomas.

As the sixth point, we invite your attention to the peace settlement on 16th December 1959, when Elias Mar Yulios, the Patriarchal delegate representing the then Patriarch Yakob III, gave in writing that they were accepting H.H. Geevarghese II Bava as the Catholicos seated on the throne of St. Thomas, in accordance with the 1934 Constitution.

The seventh point is that on 22nd May 1964 at Mar Elia Chapel, Patriarch Yakob III accepted H.H. Augen Bava as Catholicos seated on the throne of St. Thomas and Malankara Metropolitan.

Beloved children, we don't understand why the people who opposed the titles such as Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan are fancying these titles now. Some want the name 'Malankara Metropolitan', some others want to be called 'Catholicos'. But only the Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan of the Malankara Orthodox Church has the right to use the appellation "His Holiness". The reason for this is that all others have foreign spiritual overlords. Today, in this world, there is only one Catholicos-cum- Malankara Metropolitan seated on the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas - that is the Head of the Malankara Orthodox Church.

The third foundational principle is the autocephalous status of the Malankara Orthodox Church. What we understand from the Holy Bible is that when our Lord Jesus offered thrones, He offered thrones to all Apostles without specifying St. Peter or anybody else. From this we understand the truth that St. Thomas is equal to all other Apostles. St. Paul who established churches in Corinth and Ephesus has not recorded that one church is under another. So all should understand that

St. Thomas has no disqualification for claiming a throne. It is based on this premise that we understand that one head of an Orthodox Church is not subordinate to another. The 1934 Constitution elucidates this. Except for God Almighty, there is no spiritual overlord above the Catholicos of the East. This truth underlines the Autocephalous status of the Malankara Orthodox Church. The supreme court verdicts of 1958, 1995 and 2017 consolidate the autocephalous status of the Malankara Orthodox Church. These court verdicts unequivocally declare that there is only one Catholicos of the East here, the one and only Catholicos of the throne of St. Thomas.

The 5th paragraph of the supreme court verdict of 2017 emphatically states that, 'The Supreme Head of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East is the Catholicos. The Chief Authority of the temporal, ecclesiastical and spiritual administration of the Malankara church is vested with the Malankara Metropolitan'.

The Supreme court Verdicts of 1958, 1995 and 2017 have ordered that all churches under the Malankara church must be administrated in accordance with the 1934 constitution. Following the disputes regarding the supreme court verdict, the report of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association meeting held in 2002 with Justice Malimath as observer, clarifies that all the 1662 churches in the Malankara church must be administrated as per the 1934 Constitution. Nobody need to have any doubt that the children of Malankara are bound by pledge to realize that goal. In the summary of the Supreme Court Verdict of 2017, it has been stated that those who do not adhere to the 1934 constitution have no rights over the parish church or its properties.

The Supreme Court verdict is the law of the land. We hear that a Church Bill will be introduced to overcome it. Your Excellency, the Governor of Kerala! It is a well- accepted fact that the Supreme Court judgement is the law of the land. If any legislation or ordinance against the law is placed before you by the ruling Government of Kerala for approval, to disregard the 2017 judgement favouring the Malankara Orthodox church, we strongly believe that Your Excellency will use your discretion to uphold justice that is due to the Malankara Orthodox Church.

The children of the church have been waging legal battles for 145 years since 1879 for upholding the identity and autocephaly of the church. Many have become martyrs for the church. We will not go in for any settlement disregarding the court verdicts obtained by the tearful prayers of many and sacrificing the Constitution of the church. The rulers may kindly bear in mind that our policy in this regard is the same as that of our predecessors. Beloved children, you must be with us in any crisis. After God and the Fathers of the church, you are our strength. The church has always been ready for any negotiation within the framework of the court verdicts and the Constitution. We are ready for that today and tomorrow. But we are not ready for any negotiation which will undermine the foundations of the Malankara church. Those who feel the supreme court verdict can be circumvented by the church bill are living in a fool's paradise. The children of the Malankara church will fight it legally. Success will be with us who stand for truth and justice. We were born and brought up in a small village. In our village there is a saying "don't attempt to frighten a fire-cracker maker's dog by beating a small drum".

We thank the office bearers of the church, the Managing Committee members and all our spiritual children who toiled hard for the success of this great meeting. May God bless everybody present here. Let the throne of St. Thomas flourish for ever and ever.

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Days of Unceasing God Consciousness

Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros
Metropolitan

The Holy Church is on the threshold of yet another liturgical season. We are journeying through the period of Easter, towards the days of Pentecost. It was at Easter that Christ triumphantly declared victory over Satan and Death; liberated humankind from the yoke of sin and proclaimed salvation for humankind. Pentecost renews in us the arrival of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit as promised by Christ. In fact, these are the days of being keenly aware and conscious of the presence of God in us.

But we live at a time when we are sadly losing our relationship with God. Even Easter has a similar story of loss to share - the story of Mary Magdalene who sat crying in front of Christ's empty tomb, lamenting, "They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where

they have laid him". The empty tomb in front of us represents the emptying of God's presence in us. The guiding factor in our life should be the realization that even Christ's disciples and those who walk closely with Him are liable to lose Him; in fact, there are very few who haven't lost Christ at some point of time in their life. Judas who degraded himself by betraying Christ with a kiss for thirty pieces of silver; Peter who forgot the love of his master when confronted by a maid-servant; the disciples who deserted Him during His trials and passion; Pilate who washed his hands off his responsibility and the Jews who cried, 'Crucify him, crucify him' – all of them lost Him. The message of Christ's death on the cross is – 'you have lost your God'. Finding Christ whom we lost due to our struggles in life, and regaining him through repentance, is known as Resurrection.

The essence of Easter is not just that Christ triumphed over death and trampled evil, but also the good news that even if we have lost Him, we can regain Him. No matter how far we stray away, the good news of Easter is that we can find Him and reclaim Him. Listen attentively to His words that give us eternal hope, "I will be with you till the end of the World." (Mathew 28:20)

The knowledge that 'God is with us' gives us profound solace. Just imagine losing God for very negligible reasons. We should cherish God above all things and make Him our own. However, many neglect Him and try to amass other possessions like wealth, fame, recognition, esteem, authority, power and so on. Such possessions don't matter at all, what is important is making God our own.

Christ died on the cross only once. All other deaths were in the hearts of humankind. Similarly, He rose from the dead only once, all other resurrections were in the hearts of people. The excited reaction of a joyful father on the return of his prodigal son are: "This your brother was dead; he is alive again. He was lost and is found! So let us rejoice and be happy." (Luke 15:32) This proves that Death is a 'Loss', but Resurrection is being 'found'! While death expresses the feelings of loss, resurrection expresses the joy of being found.

The conviction that God is with us transforms ourselves, converting our anxieties and fears into self-confidence, courage and determination. Just as it happened to Peter, who had vowed that he did not know Christ, and all the others who deserted Him during His passion, later stepped into the streets, preaching boldly to the crowds: "You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. To this we are witnesses. (Acts 3:15)" Determined to remain with Christ and not lose him again, they were ready to go through any suffering, risks, conflict, danger, even death. "Who will separate us from the Love of Christ? Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come.

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8: 38-39)

Likewise, St. Paul who was weighed down by his guilt, was able to get rid of his deep regret and free himself from his fears because of the strength that was infused in him by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who removed the disciple's innermost fear of losing God. After the ascension of Christ, it was the Holy Spirit who mentored, educated, nourished and rooted them in the profound knowledge and illuminating presence of God.

However, it must be noted that there is a period of waiting; waiting for the fulfilment of the promise of God. Even if the wait becomes painful, the joyful coming together at the end will generate a lot of happiness. In the prevailing culture of migration, the tedious experience of

'long waits' don't need any explanation. In the words of Christ, 'But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.' (John 14:26). '… this advocate or Holy Spirit will be with you forever.' (John 14:16). This promise that was given by Christ, not only saved the disciples from worrying about losing Christ after He ascended to heaven, but also inspired them to wait for the Holy Spirit. If Easter is the 'lost being found' then Pentecost is the establishing or sustaining of that which is found. The Holy Spirit ignites the zeal for Christ within oneself; it isn't visible but can only be experienced. Jesus says : 'The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes.' (John 3:8) No one knows its origin or destination, yet the cool wind can be experienced distinctly.

The word 'Ruha' means both 'wind' and 'breath'. As described clearly in the Acts of the Apostles, on the day of the Pentecost, when the disciples were praying in the Upper Room, a wind blew over them and tongues of fire shone on each one's head. Similarly, inside each one of us, lie embers that are covered with ash. One breath can kindle these embers. The Holy Spirit can make our life radiant by setting fire to the unwanted things inside us and breathing on the ash-covered embers transforming them into tongues of fire!

The wonders that happen in a life that is 'surrendered' to such 'wind and breath' is described in the Acts of the Apostles: 'Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?' (Acts 2:7-8 NKJV). The miracle here is the ease of communication beyond the barriers of diverse languages. Often, we wonder with regret why some people find it difficult to understand



the things that we understand? The ability to communicate beyond linguistic barriers is bestowed by the Grace of God. If one desires to receive this grace, then some of the unwanted material inside us, has to be discarded, just like exhaling and inhaling. To receive something of utmost purity, some impure things have to be discarded. Christ said, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of the living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive. (7: 37-40).

To receive the Spirit, one must be pure in heart. When the heart is filled with the Spirit, it will lead us to be conscious of the presence of God. When our breath passes through the nothingness of a bamboo, music is created. When Virgin Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit during her visit to her cousin Elizabeth, she sang out in joy, magnifying the Lord. May our souls be filled with the Holy Spirit, leading us towards the consciousness of an omnipresent God.

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(H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros, is at present the Metropolitan of the Diocese of Kottayam and President of the Malankara Sabha Magazine. H.G. Mar Diascoros also serves as President of the Marth Mariam Samajam.)



The Resurrection of Christ in the Writings of St.Jacob of Serug

Resurrection : The Day of Life , Light and Renewal

Fr. Timothy (Tenny) Thomas

The Feast of the Resurrection, or Qyomtho, as celebrated in the Orthodox Church, is the pinnacle of the Christian liturgical year, marking the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is not just a historical occurrence but a transformative experience that redefines the essence of life, death, and existence itself for all creation. Among the Syriac liturgical traditions and hymnography that adorn this feast, the homilies of Saint Jacob of Serug, offer profound insights into the mystery and glory of the Resurrection.[1]

Saint Jacob, born in 451 A.D. at Kurtam (now known as 'Kurtak' in southern Turkey), in the district of Serug[2], is one of the greatest Syriac writers and poets after Saint Ephrem, and one of the most remarkable theologians of the West Syrian tradition. He left an indelible mark on Christian thought through his numerous homilies and poems. His works, deeply embedded in the theological and liturgical life of the Syrian Orthodox Church, offer profound insights into key Christian doctrines, including the Resurrection of Christ.

This short article will focus on Saint Jacob of Serug's understanding of the Resurrection of Christ. His homilies on the Resurrection focuses on the transformative power of Christ's victory over death. He views the Resurrection not merely as a historical event but as the pivotal moment in salvation history that alters the human relationship with God, life, death, and creation itself[3]. For Jacob, the Resurrection is the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation and the definitive defeat of death's tyranny over humanity[4]. Saint Jacob's homilies weave a theological and poetic narrative that captures the cosmic and personal significance of Christ's victory over death. His lyrical theology, imbued with vivid imagery, invites the faithful into a contemplative journey through the events of the Resurrection, revealing its implications for humanity and the entire cosmos[5].

The Centrality of the Resurrection

Saint Jacob places the Resurrection at

the heart of Christian faith. He understands it as the cornerstone of Christian doctrine, around which the mysteries of faith coalesce. In his homilies, he often portrays the Resurrection as the climax of Christ's salvific work, emphasizing that through His Resurrection, Christ has trampled death by death, offering eternal life to all who believe in Him. This event is not just a victory for Christ alone but a victory for all of humanity, as it opens the gates of Paradise that had been closed since the Fall.[6]

Today the banner of life has been set up in the place of death
and the clamour of watchers and the apostles was heard on it.
Today the ranks trampled Sheol, which was broken through
and its walls fell, and the way for the groups came into being.
On this day let us ask death, where is your sting? 1 Corinthians 15:55
Or, where is the victory of Sheol which has been conquered?[7]

Yesterday the Dead One was lying concealed and silent in the habitation of Sheol,
but today He is alive and gives life to the dead and raises all to life.
The day before yesterday, lance, gall and vinegar and crucifixion,
but today glory and clamour of the watchers with praise.
The day before yesterday the Only-Begotten, placed His soul in the hands of His Father,
but today He assumed it [the soul]
for He has authority as He commands all. Luke 23:46 65
Yesterday He had mounted the wood of crucifixion,
but today there is strength, resurrection of the dead and power.[8]

The Dawn of a New Creation

The Resurrection of Christ, as celebrated in the Orthodox Church, heralds the dawn of a new creation. Saint Jacob of Serug portrays the Resurrection as the moment when light broke forth from the tomb, dispelling the darkness of death and sin. He writes of Christ rising from the dead as the sun rises at dawn, illuminating the world with the radiance of divine life. This imagery invites believers to perceive the Resurrection not merely as an event in time but as the eternal sunrise that enlightens every heart that turns to Christ.

The resurrection of the Son is a new creation
to the whole world, and the world is new
on account of it [the resurrection] and hence
it [the world] is beyond sufferings.
From His resurrection life reigned over mortals,
and we have truly stripped off the old order by His death.
The Mighty One rose up and He made us,
those who were thrown down, rise up with Him.
He descended alone, but with many
He ascended from the tomb. Ephesians 4:8
The day before yesterday Scribes
were mocking at Him [saying], "Save Yourself,"
and today the watchers are kissing His tomb
which He has left and gone out. Matthew 27:40
Yesterday the Dead One was lying concealed
and silent in the habitation of Sheol
but today He is alive and gives life
to the dead and raises all to life.[9]

The Resurrection as a Cosmic Event

For Saint Jacob, the Resurrection of Christ has cosmic significance. It is an event that reorders the cosmos, restoring the harmony that existed before the Fall. He speaks of creation participating in the joy of the Resurrection, with heaven and earth rejoicing at the defeat of death. This cosmic perspective highlights the universal scope of Christ's victory, signifying the beginning of a new creation where death no longer has dominion.

On the great day of yours, in which the whole creation rejoices,
allow me to speak abundantly about your

resurrection.
On the feast that gladdened both the angels and the disciples make
me also joyful by your gift to sing about you.
O Valiant One who ascended brilliant from within the tomb;
Let me speak about you, concerning your victory filled with wonder.
On your great feast heaven is glad and earth exults because
in you heaven and earth, that were at enmity, were reconciled.[10]

The Invitation to Transformation

The celebration of the Feast of Resurrection in the Orthodox tradition is not only a commemoration, but an invitation to personal and communal transformation. Saint Jacob of Serug's homilies call the faithful to embrace the life-giving power of the Resurrection, to let the light of Christ's victory dispel the darkness within our own lives. Resurrection renews and transforms the believer's life, offering a new identity grounded in the risen Christ. When the faithful participate in the mystery of the Resurrection with a sense of awe, and respond with faith, the mystery transforms us inside out. The Saint encourages believers to die to sin and rise with Christ to newness of life. The Resurrection is thus presented as a call to renewal, to put on the new self, created after the likeness of Christ in righteousness and holiness.

On this day the world began to be established and now behold, on it again it began to be renewed.
On this day Light has shone forth amidst darkness
and the resurrection stood holding
the beginning of the new world.
Today Life began to tread underfoot
the region of death and set up mile-stones on the fearful road so that it should not fail again. [11]

Conclusion

The Feast of the Resurrection, as portrayed in the homilies of Saint Jacob of Serug, is a celebration of joy unspeakable and full of glory. This joy springs not from earthly circumstances but from the deep well of faith in the Risen Christ. Saint Jacob's homilies invites the faithful to enter into the joy of the Resurrection, to celebrate with songs of praise the defeat of death and the gift of eternal life. It also invites the faithful to contemplate the mystery of the Resurrection, to experience its transformative power and to live in the hope it provides. Through his homilies and theological contributions, Saint Jacob of Serug helps the faithful understand that Resurrection/Qyomtho is not just a historical event to be remembered but a present reality to be lived. The Resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of the Orthodox Christian faith, a source of eternal hope, and the foundation of our life in God.

End Notes:

[1] *Akhrass, Roger-Youssef, "A List of Homilies of Mar Jacob of Serugh," Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal Journal 53 (2015): 87-161.*
[2] *Sebastian Brock, "Jacob of Serugh: A Select Bibliographical Guide," in JSHT, 237; F. Graffin , " Jacques de Saroug ," in Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Vol. VIII (Paris: 1974), 56.*
[3] *Edward G. Mathews Jr., translated Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Creation of Adam and the Resurrection of the Dead, (Gorgias Press, 2014)*
[4] *Joseph Kalariparambil, Jacob of Serug: A Poet-Theologian, (SEERI, 2009).*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Thomas Kollamparambil, Jacob of Serug's Homilies on the Resurrection, (Gorgias Press, 2008), 6.*
[7] *Ibid., 10.*
[8] *Ibid., 12.*
[9] *Thomas Kollamparambil, Jacob of Serug's Homilies on the Resurrection, (Gorgias Press, 2008), 12.*
[10] *Ibid., 6.*
[11] *Thomas Kollamparambil, Jacob of Serug's Homilies on the Resurrection, (Gorgias Press, 2008), 8.*

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HOLY SPIRIT: THE AGENT OF DEIFICATION

Dr. K. L. Mathew Vaidyan Cor Episcopa

The title of this article 'Holy Spirit: The Agent of Deification' is from St. Cyril of Alexandria. In his commentary on St. John, St. Cyril says that we are deified by the Holy Spirit, who makes us likenesses of the Son, the perfect image of the Father.[1] It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes deification possible. Christ shining in us by the Holy Spirit is the basis of our glorification and sanctification. It is the Holy Spirit who is the agent in the process of justification, sanctification and glorification. All these three processes are simultaneous. The glory of God which we inherit in Christ is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. We are united in Christ to the glory of the Holy Trinity by the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul describes the process of Deification to the Corinthians "And we all with

unveiled face reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18). The Holy Spirit dwells in us and guides us in a life of faith. The living presence of Jesus Christ is assured to us by the Holy Spirit. St. Gregory of Nazianzen says, "We worship and acknowledge the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit as Three in their properties but one in their Godhead".[2] The Holy Spirit is present with us individually, corporately and eschatologically.

The Creation is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. God has poured out His Spirit on the creation through Jesus Christ. The Lord gives his disciples the power of both beholding and contemplating the Spirit.[3] Quoting 2 Corinthians 3:17, St. Basil asserts that all the creatures are in bondage, but the Holy Spirit makes it free. The Father is good, the Son is good and the Holy Spirit is good by nature. The creature shares in goodness by choosing the good. St. Basil teaches that the Holy Spirit who deifies human beings must Himself be Divine.[4] The expression 'Theon Genesthai ' (to become God) is used by St. Basil to explain this process.

The Holy Spirit revived and strengthened the early Church so that it could boldly witness Jesus, survive persecutions and preach the gospel to the people speaking different languages. (Acts 1:8, 4:33, 5:32, 6:5). In every stage of growth of the Church, the Holy Spirit guides it and inspires it. (Acts 2:4, 4:8, 6:3, 8:15, 13:2, 16:6-7). In general, the Acts of the Apostles, shows that the presence and working of Jesus Christ were experienced by the Early Church, through the Holy Spirit. The Acts of the Holy Spirit were an extension of the Ministry of Jesus Christ. The Church knew Jesus Christ intimately, who through the Holy Spirit led it, encouraged it, guided it, reproved it and appointed it for special ministry, besides carrying out His mission of healing and teaching.

The terms 'in Christ', 'in Spirit', 'the Spirit of Christ' and the 'Holy Spirit' are used by St. Paul in identical contexts. According to the Pauline view, a believer becomes one with Christ and the Holy Spirit at the same time. The life in the Spirit or the new life is attained through Baptism. By the working of the Holy Spirit, through Baptism, the old man becomes dead and the new man resurrects. (Romans 6:11, 8:10-11, Gal 3:27). St. Paul speaks three times about the seal of the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5. Eph 1:14). The term 'Arrabon' denotes advance payment in trade. The gift of the Spirit is the advance payment in the first stage of the eternal bliss that God is prepared to give those who love Him and thus lead them to a complete transformation of their human nature.

Access to God becomes possible through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18). The Greek term 'pros agony' is used in this context. It is used to mean that the Holy Spirit introduces us to God. The Spirit opens the door and ushers us into the presence of God. The Holy Spirit lives in us and makes us worthy of calling God Abba (Father) and of calling Jesus, the Lord, and of dealing with the Heavenly Father as His children (Galatians 4:5-6, 1 Corinthians 12:3, Romans 8-15). The Spirit guides us to grow into the perfect likeness of God. Love is the greatest





gift of the Spirit. All other gifts are meaningless without love. The fruits of the Spirit are a reflection of love. Those who produce the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) become one with the nature of Christ.

St. Ignatius of Antioch writes, "The believers are the stones with which the Church that is the temple of God is built." These stones are fastened together by the cord of the Holy Spirit.[5] The Holy Spirit helps the believers to become transformed and enlightened. It is the Holy Spirit that Redeems us from Sin, reconciles us to God through Jesus Christ and makes us God-like. The Holy Spirit is constantly at work in the Church, in the world and in individuals. Through the Holy Baptism the creatures of God are transformed into the temples of the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian God who created life redeems in Christ and transforms into the new being in the Holy Spirit. The final end of human beings is neither the knowledge of God nor a beatific vision of God, but "metousia", participation in the divine life. This is the same as 'Taboric Transfiguration' being transformed inwardly into the image of God.

St. Cyril of Alexandria writes "The Holy Spirit is the teacher, companion and the light of the Church as well as the one who sanctifies everything. The hosts of angels cannot claim equality with him. He appoints, reigns over and sanctifies the seven orders of angels. All gifts belong to the Triune Godhead. The gifts of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not separate. The Father gives these gifts through the Son and the Holy Spirit.[6] St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, "Become renewed in the spirit of your very being and get dressed with the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:23-24). Here 'nous' or 'being' is much more than soul or mind or some aspect of the human psychic system. It is rather the centre of our existence as a person. It is the very essence of being, penetrating the whole psycho-somatic being. This has to be renewed, changed and to be put on to a completely new basis in the Holy Spirit.

The core of the patristic teaching about the Holy Spirit is that it is the agent of Theosis or Deification. The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf, teaches us, enlightens us, causes us to be born anew and gives us everlasting life. The Holy Spirit sanctifies all the heavenly hosts. He will be with Christ on the day of Judgement. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us our knowledge of the future, of divine mysteries and of God's hidden purposes. The blessing of "becoming God" is ensured by the Holy Spirit.

End Notes:

[1] Migne's Patrologia Graeca (PG) 74:541
[2] St. Gregory Nazianzen, The panegyric on St. Basil Orations XLIII. 30
[3] St. Basil On the Holy Spirit, Ch XXII see NPNF Second Series Vol VIII Page 34
[4] St. Basil On the Holy Spirit Ch XXIII
[5] St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians 9:1
[6] St. Cyril of Alexandria. Catechetical Lectures XVI: 23, 24

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The Feast of Pentecost – A brief study

Fr. Dr. Varghese P. Varghese Pampakuda



In Christian tradition, Pentecost is the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and other followers of Jesus who gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1). The Christian church celebrates this feast on Sunday, the fiftieth day after Easter. The term Pentecost comes from the Greek Pentekoste, meaning "fiftieth". This feast actually evolved from the Jewish festival of Shavuot [feast of the weeks] which is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover.

The Feast of Pentecost in the Old Testament

There are three main feasts in Jewish tradition: 1) Passover (Feast of Unleavened Bread) - It denotes God's redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Ex.12). 2) Feast of Weeks (Pentecost or Harvest Feast). 3) Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths and Feast of Ingathering) - This feast commemorates two events: the pilgrimage from Egypt to the Promised Land in Canaan and the fruitfulness of the Promised Land (Lev. 23:33-43; Deut. 16:13-15). Celebrants lived in rough booths during the week to remember the sparse living conditions in the 40-year journey through the wilderness.

Pentecost was the festival of the first fruits of the wheat harvest (Lev. 23:15-21; Deut. 16:9-12). During this feast, the Israelites used to offer the first fruits of the harvest as a thanksgiving offering to God, in the temple in Jerusalem. This celebration is also tied to the giving of the Ten Commandments and thus bears the name Matin Torah or "giving of the Law". Jews believe that it was precisely at this time that God gave the Torah to the people through Moses on Mount Sinai.

The feast of Pentecost was also a pilgrim festival, which meant that according to Jewish Law, all the adult Jewish men had to come from wherever they were living to personally celebrate the feast in the Temple. This is the

reason why there were so many Jews from all over the world in Jerusalem on this feast day when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles.

The Feast of Pentecost in the New Testament

In Acts 1, we read that just before the Ascension, Jesus told the disciples about the Father's promised gift of the Holy Spirit. He also commanded them to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which would empower them to go out into the world and be His witness.

After a few days, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were all together when the sound of a mighty rushing wind came down from heaven, and tongues of fire rested on the believers. "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them". The believers communicated in languages they had never spoken before. They spoke with Jewish pilgrims of various languages from all across the Mediterranean world (Acts 2:1-11).

Initially everyone thought the disciples were drunk with wine. But then St. Peter came out and told them that this was actually the fulfilment of the Prophet Joel's prophecy that God would send His Spirit upon all flesh in the last days (Acts 2:12-21). Through the Good News of the kingdom, 3000 people accepted the message of Christ and were baptized and became part of the Church. By the advent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Christ and by the newly added 3000 'first fruits', this Jewish feast was transformed into a Christian festival.

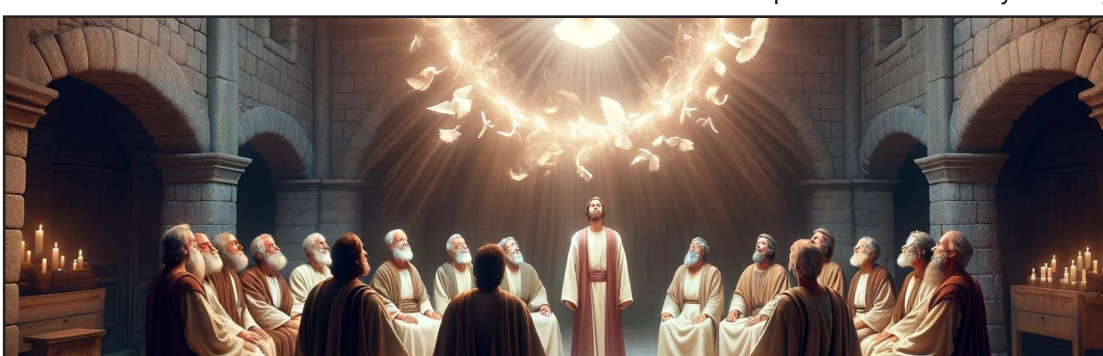
Liturgical Service of the Feast of Pentecost

In our liturgical tradition, the Season of Pentecost begins with the Feast of Pentecost and continues until the eve of the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6). The Divine Liturgy of the Pentecost is divided into three parts to celebrate the Holy Trinity: the first is addressed to God the Father, the second to God the Son, and the third to the Holy Spirit. These have been done to meditate on the three phases of the Work of the Three Persons of the Trinity – Creation, Redemption and Indwelling.

The main part of the service of Pentecost is the 'Kneeling Prayers'. The Celebrant and the Congregation kneel before the Triune God at the end of each of the three phases of the Divine Liturgy. It is to prepare themselves for the coming of the Comforter. Everyone repeatedly chants 'Kurielaison' (Greek- "Kyrie Eleison" = Lord, have mercy upon us) until the Celebrant prays the final prayer. After the kneeling prayers, the celebrant sprinkles water to symbolize our receiving of the power of the Holy Spirit at the time of our baptism.

The feast of Pentecost conveys the following insights through its practice:

1) **The Church is the new Israel**: God had promised Abraham to bless the whole world through him. The Pentecost event is the fulfilment of this promise. That is why the Holy





Spirit descended upon disciples who gathered in Jerusalem and they preached about Jesus the Savior in different regions of the world. So now we know that the Church is the new Israel and Pentecost was the final phase in the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation that was made before the foundation of the world. The day of Pentecost is the birth day of the Church.

2) **To preach the Gospel to the whole world:** The Pentecost is the reversal of the Tower of Babel event. At Babel, human pride, or the desire to make a name for themselves, resulted in the formation of many languages (Gen. 11: 1-9). But at Pentecost, the Spirit of God enabled unity through the diversity of tongues. According to Church fathers, the purpose of the gift of tongues was to proclaim the Gospel all over the earth in all languages.

3) **It is the beginning of the Church's mission** – The Ascension of Christ marked the end of Christ's earthly mission but Pentecost marks the continuation of His mission through His disciples. The Spirit of God filled them with the power and boldness needed to spread the message of the Gospel in Jerusalem, and then to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

4) **It is the celebration of our membership in the Church:** The feast of Pentecost is not just a celebration of an event which took place centuries ago. It is also a celebration of our membership in the Church because every Christian has experienced Pentecost and received "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" through the Sacrament of Baptism. We are the temples of the Holy Spirit and God dwells in us.

5) **It is an expression of becoming a member of God's kingdom:** Receiving the renewal of Holy Spirit is the sign and expression of becoming a member in the Kingdom of God. In the liturgy, kneeling down and crying Kurielaison is the most genuine and powerful expression of real repentance. Jesus has taught us that repentance is the only way to attain the Kingdom of God.

6) **The Holy Spirit is fire and water:** The fire and water are the two things that in nature do not exist together - one destroys the other. But in the presence of God, these things can coexist. Fire burns away that which is trash, that which is unclean. Fire purifies, softens and warms. We need the fire of the Holy Spirit to burn away the impurity in our soul, and we need the warmth of the Holy Spirit to encourage us. He is the water that eternally gives us life. He refreshes us and invigorates us as a spring that never, ever ends. A drought will never come upon a person in whom the Spirit dwells.

Through the special prayers and the sprinkling of water on the feast of Pentecost, we can further ignite the Holy Spirit that is dimmed in us. Even though we have received the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit by baptism, this sprinkling helps to cleanse the stains of our sins in this worldly life.

In the early centuries, the fifty days after Easter were called the Days of Pentecost. Like the Feast of Easter, these 50 days were regarded by the Church as days of joy and victory over death and sin. That is why fasting and kneeling were forbidden on these days. Pentecost marks the culmination of this joy.

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Discerning God's Will

Liza Binu

REFLECTIONS on the Bible verses Matthew Ch: 16 :21-23

In these verses, Jesus Christ is talking to his disciples about his journey to Jerusalem and the suffering and passion he will be going through. He said that very soon he is going to die on the cross and on the third day he will rise from the dead. Hearing this, his beloved disciple Peter rebukes Jesus Christ and says, "NO, that's not possible. You are the Messiah, the son of God, you will not suffer."

(During those times, death on the cross was one of the toughest punishments that was given to anyone who has committed a severe crime.)

Rather than feeling good and proud about Peter's reaction, Jesus Christ strongly responded to Peter, saying, "Stay back Satan you are blocking the way. You are thinking like man, not like God." (NASB- New American Standard Bible 1995)

Here we see, how Peter responded like you and me. Out of concern and love, he could not bear to hear about the suffering of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, according to Jesus Christ, Peter was questioning God's Will and was trying to come in the way of God's will.

Peter looked at things in a worldly manner, on the other hand Jesus Christ was willing to go through suffering and passion to redeem us from our sins.

Jesus Christ was following divine thoughts

Peter was concerned about the comforts, happiness and suffering, but Jesus had a higher purpose that was beyond such comforts. He was ready to go through the humiliation and passion so that humankind would get Salvation. For Jesus going to the Cross was the greatest



Victory.

The biggest mistake Peter committed was to rebuke Jesus — to disapprove God's will.

This is what you and me do in our day to day lives!!! Isn't it???? Because if I don't like it, it's not coming from God. The Ability to Discern God's will, is distracted by our emotions, feelings, desire and worldly pleasures. In a way, it is Spiritual Pride. We think we know everything and so can question Gods will.

Let us go back to the strong response of Jesus to Peter. Is Jesus saying Peter is Satan?? What is Satan??? Satan is nothing but an adversary, hindrance, a block, an obstruction. The will of God is that Jesus will go to Jerusalem, go through passion and die on the cross. But Peter didn't like it- so there is opposition from Peter who says NO. Jesus says that this opposition is the work of the enemy and Peter was supporting it.

SATAN can work in our life only if we give permission. Here Satan says – 'you need not suffer-- we can get the work done in other ways. So, Compromise'. The plan of our Enemy is to suggest alternate routes. It happens in our lives all the time, suggesting alternate routes and we compromise easily.

The beauty of the love of our Lord is, he knows what we need, what is our desire.

But we compromise and take an alternate path to fulfill our desire. Though we get immediate gratification we have to pay for it.

In the Bible verse Psalms-103:2,5 it is written

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- who satisfies your desire with good things."

God knows what we want. But you and I step out according to the suggestion of the enemy, take a path as we wish and at our own time and convenience. Sometimes God does not answer us that very moment. Here we lack Patience. When we are patient, there will be a space for the Lord to work in and through us.

You and I need to learn to talk like Jesus. When the enemy brings forth suggestions for a compromise, we need to be strong like Jesus and say, 'Get behind me Satan, you are a stumbling block to me.'

When Peter rebuked Jesus, the thought came from the depth of a human being not from the Holy Spirit. As Christians we need to look back and think about all our responses to the situations we confront in our day-to-day life, and ask ourselves whether we respond as humans or by the will of God. Peter was an example of Spiritual pride in the early years, but with time he learnt many lessons in his life and lived by the will of God.

1 Peter 5: 5-6 says "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time."

Let us keep telling this to ourselves, "I don't know best, God knows best". Thank you, Lord. Let us keep reminding ourselves of this statement at home, workplace, community, friends etc. and stay humble.

Three points to Take Away from the above reflections:

1) Resist to React (Peter immediately rebukes Jesus, instead he could have just prayed)

2) Resist Worldly Wisdom. (Blindly listening to others- Have your own discernment)

3) Pray for Gods wisdom, direction and plan.

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"GRAY HAIR IS A CROWN OF SPLENDOUR"

Kuruvilla M. George

Today 'retirement homes' are mushrooming everywhere. In Kerala, around 630 institutions have been registered with the Orphanage Control Board of the Social Justice Department. It can be said that 'old age care' has been initiated by Christian charity. But now many religious and social organizations have entered the arena. Many industrialists are also making their presence felt. Some of them are charitable institutions while some are business ventures. To be specific, some are free homes for poor people called "Old Age Homes" whereas paid homes are popularly known as "Senior Citizens Homes" or "Retirement Homes".

Whether it is business or charity, old age care is the need of the hour, and this is the reason for the spurt in more homes. Till recently society looked down upon the concept of old age homes. These homes were labelled as the place for those unfortunate people who had no one to take care of them. It was said with contempt that oldies are pushed into the old age dens. But the insecurity in life and the craving for safe living are compelling more and more people to look for retirement homes. Similarly, when children have to stay away from their parents as they are employed in other places either within the country or abroad; or when the children or their spouses are not willing to take care of their elderly parents; then they are compelled to search for a safe place to stay. And that is the Retirement Home.

As time changes, our attitude towards old age care also requires a change. There are many people who crave for such care. The depth of solitude and insecurity of staying alone frighten old people. Our houses are no longer

> There are two ways to address this issue: First, Old-age Homes or Retirement Homes, and second, Day Care Centers.

safe for them. We can install cameras but though these cameras give us knowledge about their activities, they cannot ensure safety. When there is no one even to talk to the elderly, old age homes become important. Even people who never bothered to do anything good for anybody in their good times, search for someone to give company and look after them.

Christian Churches are the pioneers in the field of old age care, and there is a background for it. It is because of the Christian Churches that education and medical care spread in our society. Similarly, the Churches foresaw the need for old age care. Christian love and concern for their fellow beings propelled it. But now that more people are entering the field, business considerations are penetrating into it.

Some people think old people are a burden to society. This is happening in various homes even though nothing may be explicit. It is heard that in a foreign country, the youth shot down a lot of old people, on the basis of directions given by the political administration. Who really are the old people, and what should our relationship be with them? They are the people who lay the foundation for the beautiful world that we occupy now. When we were small children, they gave us the grooming to make us the great people that we are today, for which we must be thankful and grateful to them. If we can keep them with us and take care, there is no other heaven on this earth. If we cannot, the solution nearest to heaven is an old age home.

It is good that Churches and other organizations are taking a lead in this, because this is in fact a reflection of 'divine love'. "For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." (1 John 4:20) This is not a charity but our responsibility. It is painful that some people view it as a mere commercial venture and a source of income. Even then, we can say they are discharging a social responsibility.

There are two ways to address this issue: First, Old-age Homes or Retirement Homes, and second, Day Care Centers. Old age Homes are useful for those who can leave their houses and stay full time. For those who want just to spend the daytime in the company of others in order to avoid the monotony at home, a Day Care Center is enough, if there is one nearby. Otherwise, they may not even have a meal since the whole day will be spent in utter laziness. For this, the old age homes and day care centers are a solution, because they will see that the inmates are well fed. Society has to remove



the stigma unnecessarily attached to it. Even those who criticize old age homes will look for something like this when their force is spent.

These homes are to be run, not by "bureaucrats" but by "friends". They should be able to give a few moments of happiness and solace to those who come to them. In Western countries, there are dedicated volunteers to spend time with the aged. They are given special training for this. The time that they spend thus will be credited to a time account which will be useful to them in their old age.

Some changes are called for in the social security area also. In India, income tax is collected but there is no provision to return any retirement benefits when the tax payer is not having any income. In western countries tax collection is related to social security. Similarly, Indians are subjected to an inhuman taxation in the form of GST. This is merely an onlooker fee collected by the Government in the course of transactions between humans and institutions, without the Government rendering any specific service. By this, taxed money is taxed again and again. There is a proverb in Malayalam, if you plant ten trees in your good times, you can have its fruits in your adverse times. But this is not the practice in India. One-sided taxation adversely affects the senior citizens.

Another item of interest is the Bank Interest. Bank Deposits are inevitable as we don't have too many safe options to invest our hard-earned money. Banks use this money to make more money but they don't share the profits with the investors, other than giving petty amounts as interest. Actually, they are protecting their own interest rather than that of the depositors. The Government is also supporting them. The seniors can live on their interest income if only there is 10% return. To make it worse, 30% income tax is also cut from this. The Banks make ex parte decisions regarding the interest to be paid. If 10% interest is paid and the tax rate is kept at the TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) rate of 10% it would have been beneficial to the senior citizens who are in the last lap of their lives, after rendering their part in nation building.

Changes are required in the field of Insurance also. At a time when insurance is required, there is no insurance-cover for old people. If at all there is cover, the premium will be very high. Insurance companies look and plan for their massive profit only. There is no social commitment. In short, I would like to say that in order to take care of the senior citizens, it is not only old age homes, but a social revolution is required.

There are many bureaucrats who are said to be smart in making plans to exploit the common man with percentage exercises. But it is good if they remember that they will also retire shortly and will have to wait for someone's mercy. So, it is better if they could make some good plans for the helpless senior citizens. They should not be made to beg on the streets for their necessities. There are many people on the roads pleading for their retirement benefits and pension. The democratic governments also have to pay special attention in this matter. It is not that it becomes an additional source to manipulate funds but some good steps need to be taken under the Social Justice Department which oversees the welfare of the senior citizens also. Let what King Solomon said become true: "Gray hair is a crown of splendour." (Proverbs 16:31).

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(Mr. Kuruvilla M. George IRS, Retired Additional Commissioner of Income Tax, is currently serving as Secretary of the Alwaye Fellowship House & Chief Editor of the "Church Weekly" Magazine. He was a member of the Working Committee, Malankara Sabha Managing Committee and Advisory Board Member of Malankara Sabha Magazine during 2012-2017.)



KOONAN KURISU PILGRIMAGE CENTRE: A REMINDER

Prof. Jacob Kurian Onattu

On these eventful days when the echoes of the Marthoman legacy are reverberating throughout Malankara, the Oath of the Slanting Cross (Koonan Kurisu Sathyam) and its venue should sparkle in our memories once again. It is regrettable that not only the youngsters of the day, but even the grey-haired people do not know much about that great insurrection (which historians often call the first independence struggle in India) or about the Old Syrian Church, Mattancherry, where that historic event took place. Recently, the Sunday School teachers of Mar Gregorios Church, Njaliakuzhy, Vakathanam organized a study trip to historically important churches near Kochi such as the Diamper Synod Church at Udayamperoor, St. Peters & St. Pauls Old Syrian Church at Fort Kochi and Koonan Kurisu Saint George Orthodox Pilgrimage Centre at Mattancherry. This visit covered some more churches in Fort Kochi like St. Francis C.S.I. Church, one of the oldest European churches in India and Santa Cruz Cathedral Basilica under the Catholic Diocese of Cochin. The trip showed us the need to study the history of great places where critical events in church history took place.

The Saint Thomas Christians of Kerala (often referred to as Malankara Nazranis) lived and worshipped here for many centuries with their own local customs and traditions under the leadership of their Chief called Archdeacon (Arkkadiyakkon). They had occasional ecclesiastical relationships with some Eastern/Persian churches which followed the Alexandrian (East Syriac) liturgical rites. Historians have recorded that in 1498, when Vasco da Gama, Portuguese explorer and sailor reached the Kerala shores, he was overwhelmed with surprise to find Christian churches here. In the years that followed, the Portuguese colonizers tried their best to subjugate the indigenous church of Kerala and impose the western /Roman theology, rituals and religious practices upon the Archdeacon and his followers. The infamous Synod of Diamper (Udayamperoor Sunahados) held in June 1599 under the leadership of Aleixo De Menezes, then Archbishop of Goa, was the culmination of

these efforts. As the Portuguese wielded great military power in those days, Menezes could easily intimidate and subjugate the Archdeacon and his followers. The Archbishop succeeded in making Latin the liturgical language instead of Eastern Syriac. He burnt all our books and holy vestments and also destroyed the centuries-old liturgical traditions and rituals. Thus, by the beginning of the 17th century, our ancestors also came under the authority of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Goa. This condition prevailed for almost half a century.

'The Oath of the Slanting Cross' which took place at Mattancherry on 3rd January 1653, was a historic struggle that our ancestors undertook to recapture the temporarily lost identity and dignity of the Saint Thomas Christians (Malankara Nazranis). The immediate provocation for this revolt was the murder of Mar Ahatallah, a Bishop from Syria who came to India to liberate the Malankara Nazranis from the Roman Catholic yoke. When the news spread that Mar Ahatallah was drowned in the Arabian Sea by the Portuguese, several hundred Nazranis led by Archdeacon Thomas assembled near the stone cross of the Mattancherry Church on 3rd January 1653. They tied a rope to the top of the cross and holding on to it, took the oath that they would not submit to the Roman Catholic hierarchy nor accept Portuguese dominance in ecclesiastical and secular life. It is said that in the emotional outburst, they clung on to the rope so strongly that the cross bent down slightly, thereby giving the event the name the Great Oath of the Bent (Slanting) Cross or 'Koonan Kurisu Sathyam.' A few days later, Archdeacon Thomas, the great leader of the revolt was consecrated bishop with the name 'Mar Thoma I' by twelve priests. After several years of evolution, the successors of Mar Thoma I came to be known as 'Malankara Metropolitan', a title still retained by the Catholicos of the East, the supreme spiritual head of the Malankara Nazranis.

In the wake of the Great Oath, a good number of the Malankara Nazranis gave up their allegiance to the Roman church, stopped worshipping in Latin and returned to the old Nazrani ways. The present day Orthodox / Jacobite / Mar Thoma / C.S.I. Syrian denominations of Kerala are their descendants. The progress of these churches was hampered by internal feuds, power conflicts and indiscipline. On the contrary, the section which accepted Portuguese dominion and followed their rituals and latinized worship, practised stern discipline under strong priestly control. So they grew in number and influence in the course of time. It has to be remembered that out of the 'seven and a half" parish churches founded by Saint Thomas, only one and a half are under the control of the Malankara Orthodox Church while the remaining six are under Catholic Church administration. Ironically, there is a Catholic Church at Mattancherry which claims to have descended from the original Mattancherry church where the historic anti-Catholic uprising took place!

The Mattancherry Marthommen (St. Thomas) church was originally founded by Mathen, a wealthy and influential merchant of Mattancherry in the early years of the 15th century. It is believed that this church and the stone cross where the Great Oath took place were destroyed in a battle or clash for supremacy. The Mattancherry church was reconstructed in 1751 under the supervision of Mar Baselios Sakralla of Aleppo who came down to Kerala with the holy relics of St. George. Instead of the usual practice of constructing the quarters for priests, bishops etc. outside the church, the residential arrangement here was built inside the church as a special loft. Mar Sakralla Bava breathed his last in this 'malikamuri'. His mortal remains were interred at the Kandanadu church where Mar Thoma IV



was earlier laid to rest. The Mattancherry church is famous as the church where the holy relics of St. George brought to Kerala by Mar Sakralla Bava, were installed. Before the Old Seminary, Kottayam, was founded (1815), the Old Syrian Church, Mattancherry, also functioned as an institution for training priest-aspirants. Many celebrated church fathers including Mar Thoma V, Mar Thoma VI, Pulikottil Mar Dionysius and St. Gregorios of Parumala have stayed in the loft-quarters (Malikamuri) of this renovated church.

The Old Syrian Church, Mattancherry was brought under the control of Kochi diocese during the tenure of H.H. Baselios Geevarghese II. St. Peter's & St. Paul's Old Syrian Church at Fort Kochi, was built almost a century after the Mattancherry church. In the 1960s, these two churches functioned as a joint parish with Worship service and Holy Qurbana on alternate Sundays. During the days of H. H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews II, a cross-tower was built near the main entrance to the Mattancherry Church. Yet another milestone is the declaration of the church as 'Koonan Kurisu Pilgrimage Centre' by H.H. Didymos I Bava Thirumeni.

The final restoration of the church and its premises took place in recent years under the direct guidance of H.H. Paulose II Bava Thirumeni. The encroachments made by some neighbours were removed, broken boundary walls were rebuilt and the cross-tower, the stone cross and the cemetery were all rebuilt. The roof of the church was redone in Egyptian style, using compressed earth blocks, totally avoiding cement and concrete. The major portions of the church built under the leadership of Sakralla Bava were kept intact while restoring the roof. Architecture students from different parts of India pay visits to this shrine to study the earthen block-based construction borrowed from the Pyramids. Along with the holy relics of St. George, the keepsakes of our saints Parumala Mar Gregorios and Vattasseril Mar Dionysius also have been installed in the St. George Orthodox Koonan Kurisu Pilgrimage Centre Church. H. H. Paulose II Bava of blessed memory, took the initiative for all these and also brought the Pilgrimage Centre under the direct control of the Malankara Metropolitan. The present Catholicos H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III is also extending whole-hearted support for further development of this historical monument.

Now-a-days, a good number of pilgrims visit this church which has a rich heritage that is about 6-7 centuries old. It was the venue and still stands as a mute witness to some of the very glorious moments in the history of the Malankara Church. When parishes, sunday schools and other spiritual organizations are planning study trips, Mattancherry St. George Pazhaya Suriyani Palli (Koonam Kurisu Pilgrimage Centre) should be included as an unavoidable destination.

(For further guidance: Very Rev. Benyamin Ramban, Manager, Mob: 9961285573)

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(Prof. Jacob Kurian Onattu retired Principal, Baselius College, Kottayam, is currently serving as NAAC peer team member for accreditation of colleges across India. He was elected to the Managing Committee of the Orthodox church twice from 2002 to 2012 and served as Working Committee member during 2017-22. He has also served as National Vice-President of the All India Association for Christian Higher Education, New Delhi.)

NEWS

Marthoman Heritage Assembly (Marthoman Paithruka Sangamam)



The Marthoman Heritage Assembly was held on 25th February 2024 at Nehru Stadium, Kottayam, Kerala. The Assembly was held to commemorate the conclusion of the 1950th year of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas; the 90th anniversary of the Malankara Sabha Constitution and the 90th Memorial of Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI – the architect of the Constitution of the Malankara Sabha.

The Marthoman Heritage Assembly was inaugurated by H.E. Shri Arif Mohammad Khan, Honourable Governor of Kerala and the keynote address was delivered by H.E. Advocate P S. Sridharan Pillai, Honourable Governor of Goa. The meeting was presided over by the Catholicos, H.H. Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews III. Felicitation speeches were delivered by H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Chrysostomos, Secretary of the holy Episcopal Synod; Smt. Veena George and Shri V.N. Vasavan, Honourable Ministers of Kerala Government; and Shri Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishan and Shri Chandy Oommen, Honourable Members of Kerala Legislative Assembly.

Advocate Biju Oommen, Secretary of the Malankara Association delivered the Welcome Address. Archbishop Anthony of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Melchizadek of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Fr. Dr. Thomas Varghese Amayil, Malankara Sabha Priest Trustee and Shri Ronnie Varghese, Malankara Sabha Lay Trustee, spoke on the occasion. The dignitaries remarked that the Malankara Sabha Constitution came into effect even prior to the Indian Constitution, reflecting the transparent structure and democratic practice inherent in and upheld by the Malankara Orthodox Church.

H.H. the Catholicos recalled the exemplary services rendered by the Church in the field of education, health and nation building. With regard to the discussions concerning the Church Bill His Holiness said, "The supreme court verdict is the law of the land. We hear that a Church Bill is going to be introduced to overcome it. Your Excellency, the Governor of Kerala! It is a well- accepted fact that the judgement of the supreme court is the law of the land. If any legislation or ordinance against the law is placed before you for approval by the ruling Government of Kerala, to disregard the 2017 judgement favouring the Malankara Orthodox church, we strongly believe that your Excellency will use your discretion to uphold justice that is due to the Malankara Orthodox Church." Seen as a positive response, the Honourable Governor of Kerala mentioned in his talk that all citizens of the country are to abide by the law of the land and that he is sworn by oath to protect the law of the land.

The dignitaries presented gifts and felicitations to the Catholicos on the occasion of his 75th birthday. An overwhelming one-lakh-plus participants comprising Bishops, Priests, members of the Malankara Sabha Managing Committee, office bearers of various Malankara Sabha Organizations and the laity representing various dioceses of the Malankara Orthodox Church, attended the Assembly making it a grand success. A 301- member mega musical

choir, rendered devotional songs that added music and rhythm to the Assembly.

The Holy Episcopal Synod



Kottayam: The Holy Episcopal Synod met at Catholicate Palace, Devalokam from 19th to 23rd February, 2024. It was presided over by H.H. Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Mathews III and was well attended by all Metropolitans.

The Holy Synod approved the proposal of the Managing Committee to form two new Dioceses with centers in Australia and Canada. It was decided to increase the representation of women in the administrative and decision-making bodies of the church, and give instructions to make suitable structural changes in the Constitution. The Synod also decided to design methods and plans that would encourage and increase the involvement of youth and children in the life and activities of the church. In order to increase the participation of the youth in the Holy Qurbana, the Synod gave permission to churches to arrange for more worship services during the week, in addition to the Sunday services, to cater to the varied working hours of professional youth and students. The timings of the Worship service could be fixed as per the convenience and needs of each region.

Two spiritual organizations by the name St. Dionysius Forum for those above 40 years of age and St. Joseph Elders Forum for those above the age of 60, are to be initiated for senior men and women to be proactive in church.

The rest of the decisions included Publishing texts of the wisdom of the ancient church fathers in Malayalam; and to explore the possibilities of opening a well-equipped mental health center, a neuro-rehabilitation center in Parumala Hospital along with other satellite health care centers.

Ecumenical Relations

As part of the strengthening of ecumenical relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, a medical team from the Moscow Cathedral Care will be visiting the church.

Other matters

It was agreed in principle that permanent deacons would be ordained.

The Holy Synod backed the Kalpana of His Holiness barring priests from having membership in political parties and being actively involved in the activities of such political parties. Diocesan Metropolitans were requested to take note of the developments.

Managing Committee (MC) Meeting

The Church has a budget of 1041 Crore

The Annual Budget for the year 2024-25 was accepted and passed by the Managing Committee in its meeting held on 21.03.2024 at the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. The budget was presented by the Association Secretary Adv. Biju Oommen. The Rs. 1041-Crore budget is expected to give impetus to the charitable and development projects of the church.

Condolences

The MC condoled the passing away of eminent Senior Adv. Mr. Fali Sam Nariman. In a brief statement, His Holiness condoled his death and spoke highly of Mr. Nariman's immense contribution to the Indian Judicial system and to the Malankara Orthodox Church.

Condolences were expressed on the

passing away of Dr. K. C. Mammen Kandathil, the Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Thekkil Cor Episcopa, Fr. Dr. P. S Samuel Cor Episcopa, Fr. Thomas Kokaparambil and Fr. M. M. Abraham.

Felicitations

Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew who was elected to the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches, (WCC), and H.G. Alexios Mar Eusebious, Rev. Fr. Joseph Samuel Karukayil Cor Episcopa, Joji P. Thomas, Adv. Pracin George Kuriakose, Fr. Aji K. Thomas, Fr. Jijo K. Joy and Varsha Merin Varghese who were elected as office bearers of the Kerala Council of Churches (KCC), were felicitated. H.G. Dr. Abraham Mar Seraphim led the Retreat. All Metropolitans attended the Managing Committee.

The Sahodaran Project

Parumala: Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (MOSC) held a ceremony to celebrate the inauguration and completion of various assignments under the flagship of The SAHODARAN PROJECT at Parumala. The prestigious ceremony was chaired and attended by eminent personalities involved with various humanitarian activities and social welfare. Her Highness Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bayi inaugurated the ceremony and handed over the keys of 10 new houses, constructed upon the land donated by the MOSC member Mr Jacob Skaria, at Pachira, Kottayam District. Expressing her appreciation for the project she said, "The Sahodaran project of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is the epitome of the act of kindness and compassion." Various other initiatives namely Kidney Transplantation Aid Project, Mobile Palliative Care Unit, and Housing for All Project (i.e. construction of 100 affordable houses) were inaugurated by His Grace Geevarghese Mar Aprem, Auxiliary Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Archeparchy of Kottayam, H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros, Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese (MOSC), and Brahmasree Sachidananda Swamy, President of Sree Narayana Dharmasangham Trust, respectively.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Suffragan Metropolitan gave the presidential address while distinguished guests like H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Chrisostomos Metropolitan, Secretary to the Holy Episcopal Synod of (MOSC), Geevarghese Mar Aprem, Auxiliary bishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Archeparchy of Kottayam, H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Diascoros, Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese of (MOSC), and Brahmasree Sachidananda Swamy, president of Sree Narayana Dharmasangham Trust, K Sahalabth Darimi, Chief Imaam Of Jumma Masjid, Mannar, and Mr. Rony Varghese, Lay Trustee, MOSC offered felicitations on the occasion.

H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, the Supreme Head of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India, gave away the certificates and medals, to the members of the Sahodaran Project, as a token of appreciation for their sincere and dedicated service for the successful completion of the assignments. The Sahodaran Project was started in the memory of late lamented H.G. Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, the 8th Catholicos of the Malankara Church on 12th February 2022. Over the period of two years since its inception various projects associated with human welfare and development, worth Rs 12 Crore, have been successfully completed

Two Christian Camps for Families and Youth from Outside Kerala- In Kottayam - In May:

COLT 2024: This is a 33-year-old Camp for Orthodox Leadership Training for Young Orthodox born and brought up outside Kerala. For 3 days, about 25+ young people [aged 17 to 35] from all over India [in the past, youth

from Egypt, USA, UK, Malaysia and Singapore have participated], will live together in Sophia Centre in Old Seminary, Kottayam and learn about Christian Leadership, about Christ and his body, and the mother Orthodox Church. This will be done through interactive sessions by the best Leaders, interspersed with outdoor visits. From the fourth day on, they move by coach to churches and monasteries on a 'pilgrimage' – with a fun-filled but deep spiritual camaraderie - as they discover themselves, their relationship with God, and learn how they can achieve their highest potential. This year's COLT is from May 19th to 25th, 2024.

FAM-COLT 24: For the first time an All-India Family COLT is being organised. Here Orthodox Parents from Outside Kerala are encouraged to bring their families for a 4-day program in the lap of mother nature in Mar Baselios Dayara in Njaliakuzhy, near Kottayam. Some of the Church's most renowned teachers will be taking varied interactive sessions. Kids will be looked after by special staff trained in Children's Ministry so that parents can be free. A one-day tour to take in the aroma of historic sites, old churches, monasteries and convents, is also included, designed to bring in the 'Faith of our Fathers' to modern Orthodox Couples. A Single Parent may also join. Accommodation: One Family-One Room with attached bath. FAM-COLT is from May 9th to 12th, 2024.

Fr Philip and Bibi Kuruvilla are the Directors of these programs which will be conducted in English and are focused on those born and brought up Outside Kerala. Both are supported by the Mission Board of Calcutta Diocese. For more details please contact Fr. Philip Kuruvilla: Whatsapp: +91-9823152313 and E-Mail: frpkuruvilla@hotmail.com. LIMITED SEATS. BOOK NOW!



FEAST OF

Pampady Thirumeni

APRIL 5, 2024 | MAR KURIAKOSE DAYARA, PAMPADY

"Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."
Hebrews 13:7